



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
North Central Division

GREAT LAKES LEVELS

UPDATE NO. 22

1 MAY 1987

Below average precipitation on the Great Lakes basin continued through the month of April. Early reports indicate that the April precipitation ranged from less than half the average amount on Lake Superior to near average on Lake Ontario. As a result, the Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron levels stayed relatively constant during April instead of beginning their seasonal rises. The other Great Lakes have begun their seasonal rise, however, Lakes St. Clair and Erie levels were at a slower rate than expected. Currently, Lake Superior's mean monthly level is about 0.4 foot above its long-term mean and the Lake Ontario mean monthly level is about 1.1 foot above its long-term mean. The middle lakes remain about 2 feet above their long-term monthly mean levels. The attached bulletin shows the actual levels through April and the six-month forecasts.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is continuing to direct the outflows for Lakes Superior and Ontario. The Lake Superior outflow according to Plan 1977 is continuing during May and will increase from the winter outflow of 70,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to the open water period discharge of 89,000 cfs. The Lake Ontario outflow continues to be regulated under an emergency action known as Criterion (k) and provided for in the IJC's Orders of Approval. Throughout April, the discharge was increased at every opportunity allowed by the downstream conditions in the Montreal area during the spring runoff from the Ottawa River. By April 20th, the St. Lawrence River flow was up to 340,000 cfs and water in excess of the powerplants' capacity was being spilled over the Long Sault Dam. The emergency action through April has reduced the Lake Ontario level by about 2-1/3 feet below the level that would have occurred without regulation. We were also fortunate in April to have no major shore damaging storms to occur.

Under the authority of Public Law 84-99, the Corps of Engineers has continued with the Advance Measures program, which consists of constructing preventive works prior to a flood threat to life and property. There has been little change in the status of the program since my April 3rd summary.

The Corps is also authorized to assist local communities in responding to actual flooding situations, to supplement maximum state and local efforts. Requests for assistance should be directed through local and state disaster assistance agencies. For Great Lakes basin technical assistance or information, please contact one of the following Corps of Engineers District Offices:

For New York, Penn. & Ohio
Colonel Daniel R. Clark
Cdr, Buffalo District
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199
(716) 876-5454-Ext. 2201

For Mich., Minn. & Wisc.
Colonel Robert F. Harris
Cdr, Detroit District
P.O. Box 1027
Detroit, MI 48231-1027
(313) 226-6440 or
226-6441

For Ill. & Indiana
LTC Frank R. Finch
Cdr, Chicago District
219 S. Dearborn St.
6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-1797
(312) 353-6400

You can still get the "Help Yourself" brochure from the District Offices listed above or from this office: North Central Division, 536 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1592, telephone: (312) 353-6364.


Near-shore wave warnings are provided by various National Weather Service Offices for certain portions of the Great Lakes. Information can normally be heard on the National Weather Service's local weather radio broadcasts.

The Corps of Engineers' "Self-Help" program of distributing sandbags, sand and plastic sheeting to threatened communities is continuing. As mentioned, you should call your local or state disaster assistance agencies to obtain materials and assistance under this program. A summary of distributions through April 24th is as follows:

	<u>Sandbags</u>	<u>Sand (tons)</u>	<u>Plastic Sheeting (rolls)</u>
Buffalo District	3,907,000	58,206	1,410
Chicago District	240,400	1,423	41
Detroit District	3,410,900	22,589	1,768
Total	7,558,300	82,318	3,219

On the Great Lake water level study, the International Joint Commission (IJC) recently approved a study directive and named a Reference Project Steering Committee comprised of two lead IJC Commissioners as well as Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Regional Director General, Conservation and Protection, Environment Canada and myself. Copies of the Lake Levels Study Directive are available from both the U.S. and Canadian Section Offices of the IJC.

You have my assurance that these updates will continue to accompany the monthly bulletin until the lakes return to safe levels.


JOSEPH PRATT
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding